Notes from the North Coast (tentative title) - Malak Helmy

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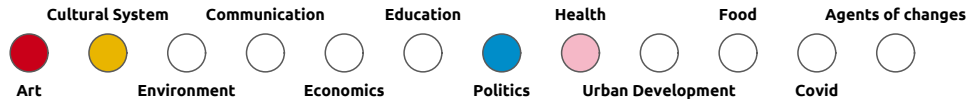
The north coast of Egypt lies to the west coast of the city of Alexandria. It is a diverse region where timelines in history, demographics, class and diversity within its cultures span from the 20â€™s (such as â€˜Agamiâ€™ resort, just to the western tip of the Alexandrian metropolis), the 40â€™s (being the famous battle of â€˜El â€“ Alameinâ€™ where the allies defeated Germany in WWII), to the 70â€™s and 80â€™s (seeing a rise in the socialist type architecture of the first modern leisure resorts in an attempt to boost local tourism beyond the congestion and population density of Alexandriaâ€™s stressed coast, during the summer holiday rush), then up until the present day building boom sweeping more and more of the coast year by year.It is an area where the circular flow of money and wealth is regenerated during the summer months and suspends itself in a complete standstill during the rest of the year. Such activity during the summer months is thought of as an indicator to the countryâ€™s economic virility, in the sense that building and land prices inflate or deflate and middle to upper-middle class consumer behavior can be detected within this laboratory like isolation.The question here arises; whether such places are a useful case study, in order to properly detect and/or research economic, urban, social and environmental change in Egypt at large. Such geographic isolation is void of the fluctuation and / or migratory demographic complexities that mega cities like Alexandria and Cairo, possess. So in short the summer on the north coast region can provide clear information through intentional behavioral characteristics performed year after year and summer after summer by both the residents yearly migration to such a resort and the life and culture of the locals who come from the local towns surrounding and embedded within the coastal region.Such a â€˜Tabula-Rasaâ€™, with its yearly renewal, is a framework and sanitized research environment for which scientific data (again through looking at fluctuations in the statistical economic, cultural and environmental changes) can be collected without any intervention from outside factors that are clearly present in more complex and socially networked environments. The project aims to create an audio-visual and textual laboratory on the North Coast of Egypt. The laboratory will be composed of a society of researchers and artists to discover, record and collect data from this site in order to produce an alternative scientific module (Archive) of the North Coast. Both the archive and the lab will serve as a platform for this society to delve further into the data collected, to deconstruct and reframe it to produce works (in the forms of video, writing, drawing etc.) that explore codes of representational forms, the phenomenological, and particularities of perception in the site of leisure. The project explores and researches the different agents, how they work together to create systems, which produce strange phenomenon through interaction and affect.
The project does not seek to act as cultural or social criticism. Its goal is not to describe, elaborate, interpret, evaluate nor critique the culture in this site of leisure as its end. This project seeks to reframe its research and use the site as a platform from which to explore codes of representational forms, perception, the phenomenological. It is interested in transmitting the site in fragments as an incomplete collective imaginary of multiple objects, individuals and actors.



Geographies of change

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